



Complicated Country

FOUR



Intro

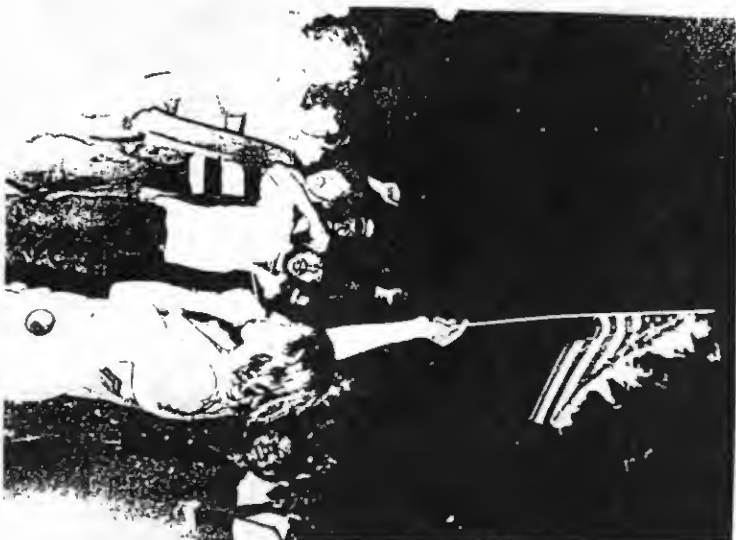
It's impossible to walk down the streets these days without having your senses assaulted with the sights and sounds of bulldozers, wrecking balls, dumptrucks, jackhammers and construction crews wreaking havoc on homes, sidewalks, buildings, streets and neighborhoods throughout the city.

Members of the old Richmond elite like Brandermill residents call this progression. Greed driven city bureaucrats call it necessary revitalization. But the poor, tired, downtrodden masses know these practices by the names that they really are. Rape! Destruction! Brutality! Gentrification! Elimination!

Our city with the honorable Mayor Timothy Kaane at the wheel is being driven over the edge. Police sweeps, Marine invasions, Klan leaders and corrupt city dignitaries attack us every night on the news, in the papers and in our own communities.

Everywhere you go, everyone you talk to it is easy to sense that things are coming to a boiling point here in Richmond. The people are sick and tired of all the smokescreen policies, disillusion, rhetoric and hollow promises. The spirit of revolt dangles off in the distant night air. Don't say you haven't been warned Richmond!

Up the Struggle,
Greg



This Issue is dedicated to the courageous
Anarchists of Eugene, Oregon.

PLAIN WORDS.

The powers that be make no secret of their will to stop, here in America, the world-wide spread of revolution. The powers that must be reckoned that they will have to accept the fight they have provoked.

A time has come when the social question's solution can be delayed no longer; class war is on and cannot cease but with a complete victory for the international proletariat.

The challenge is an old one, oh "democratic" lords of the autocratic republic. We have been dreaming of freedom, we have talked of liberty, we have aspired to a better world, and you jailed us, you clubbed us, you deported us, you murdered us whenever you could.

Now that the great war, waged to replenish your purses and build a pedestal to your sains, is over, nothing better can you do to protect your stolen millions, and your usurped fame, than to direct all the power of the murderous institutions you created for your exclusive defence, against the working multitudes rising to a more human conception of life.

The jails, the dungeons you reared to bury all protesting voices, are now replenished with languishing conscientious workers, and never satisfied, you increase their number every day.

It is history of yesterday that your gunmen were shooting and murdering unarmed masses by the wholesale; it has been the history of every day in your regime; and now all prospects are even worse.

Do not expect us to sit down and pray, and cry. We accept your challenge and mean to stick to our war duties. We know that all you do is for your defence as a class; we know also that the proletariat has the same right to protect itself, since their press has been suffocated, their mouths muzzle, we mean to speak for them the voice of dynamite, through the mouth of guns.

Do not say we are acting cowardly because we keep in hiding, do not say it is abominable; it is war, class war, and you were the first to wage it under cover of the powerful institutions you call order, in the darkness of your laws, behind the guns of your homestead slave.

No liberty to you accept but yours; the working people also have a right to freedom, and their rights, our own rights we have set our minds to protect at any price. We are not many, perhaps more than you dream of, though but are all determined to fight to the last, till a man remains buried in your bastilles, till a hostage of the working class is left to the tortures of your police system, and will never rest till, your fall is complete, and the laboring masses have taken possession of all that rightly belongs to them.

There will have to be bloodshed; we will not dodge; there will have to be murder; we will kill, because it is necessary; there will have to be destruction; we will destroy to rid the world of your tyrannical institutions.

We are ready to do anything, and everything to suppress the capitalist class; just as you are doing anything and everything to suppress the proletarian revolution.

Our mutual position is pretty clear. What has been done by us so far is only a warning that there are friends of popular liberties still living. Only now we are getting into the fight; and you will have a change to see what liberty-loving people can do.

Do not seek to believe that we are the Germans' or the devil's paid agents; you know well we are class conscious men with strong determination, and no vulgar liability. And never hope that your cops, and your hounds will ever succeed in ridding the country of the anarchistic germ that pulses in our veins.

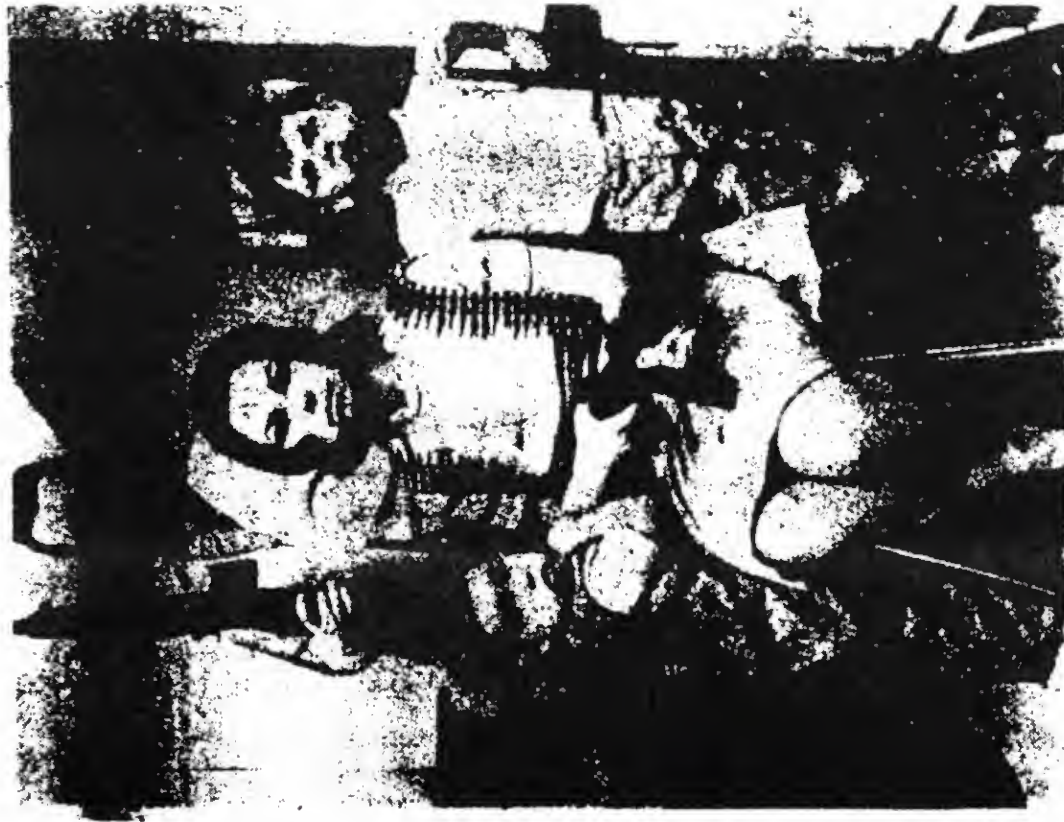
We know how we stand with you stand with you and know how to take care of ourselves.

Besides, you will never get all of us... and we multiply nowadays.

Just wait and resign to your fate, since privilege and riches have turned your heads.

Long live social revolution! down with tyranny!
THE ANARCHIST FIGHTERS.

up against the wall



MOTHERFUCKER

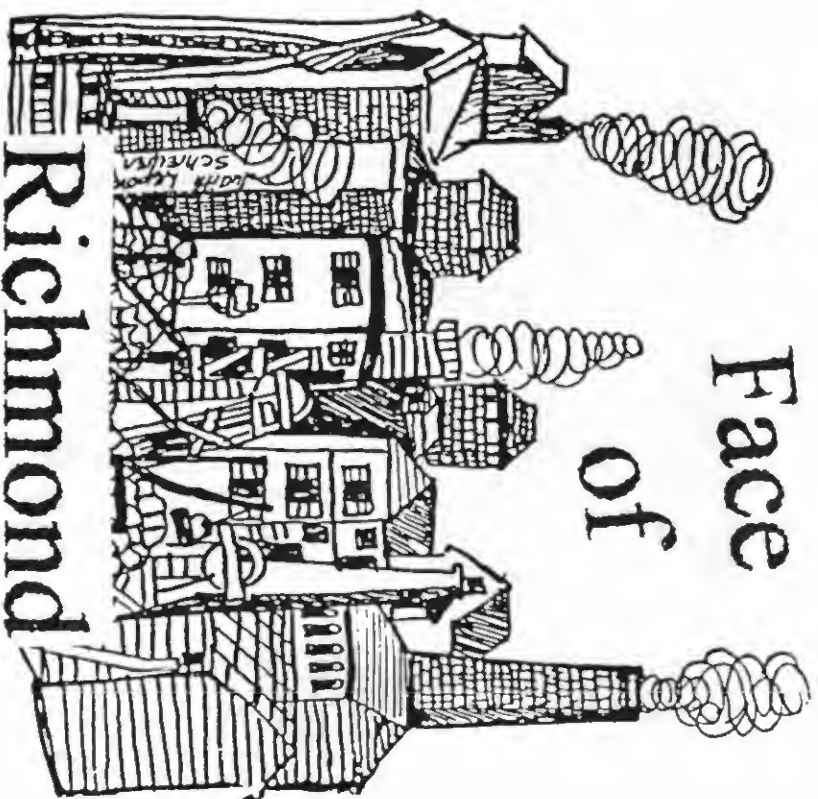
Acknowledgements:

Front cover photo: The great Wall Street Explosion of September 16, 1920. Done in retaliation of the conviction of Sacco & Vanzetti.
Back cover photo: Paris '68 - The great revolution that almost was.
Graphics: Style Weekly, "American Cities, a Working Class Viewpoint", "Communism and the New Left", "Sacco and Vanzetti, The Anarchist Background", "Social Problems in America" and "Everybody's Bike Book"...



Shameless self promotion: Issues #2 and #3 and extras of #4 are available for 55 cents each or any two for a dollar. I am also looking for folks who would be interested in bulk trading for distroing. All correspondence to Complete Control P.O. Box 5021, Richmond, Virginia 23220 or by email at gregwells36@hotmail.com.

The Changing Face

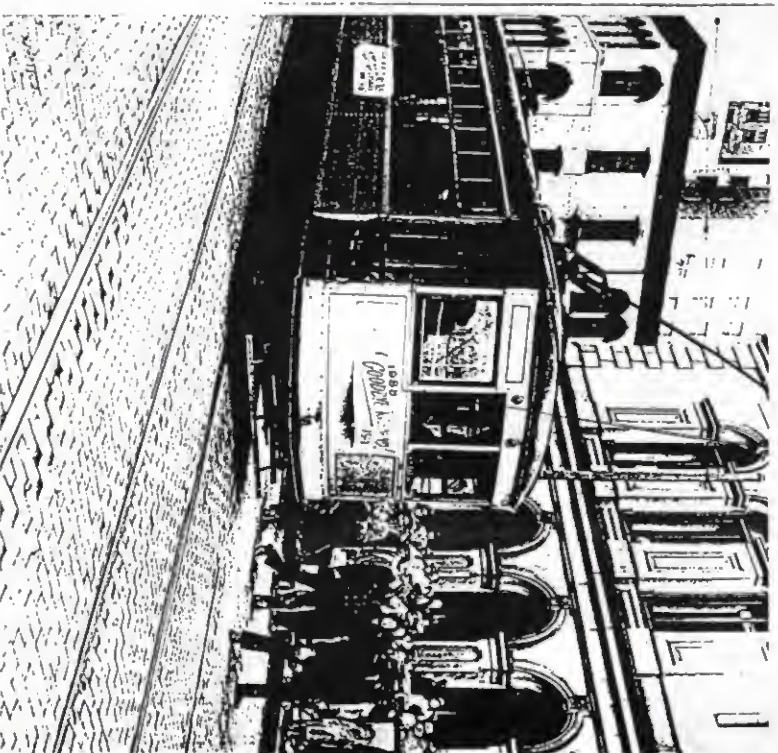


If there is any one overriding statement to sum up Richmond 1999 it would be that it is a city without an identity, a city so completely wrapped up in past that it has abandoned its number one resource in the here and now, its citizens.

Despite the ghosts of generation's past and the always lingering racial insensitivities, Richmond communities from Church Hill to Blackwell to Randolph to Oregon Hill all have a common thread that binds them in the face of great adversity that being a strong sense of working class comradere.

Once upon a time Richmond was a major industrial hotbed. Five railways called Richmond their home earlier this century. Steel mills, iron works, tobacco warehouses and the like dominated the bustling waterfront both in the city and on the Manchester side of the James.

CRITICAL MASS



Downtown Richmond was once a thriving and vibrant atmosphere up until the widespread emergence of the automobile in the mid 1940's. Electric Streetcars provided abundant service to and from the business district, along with a very sufficient Railroad Network providing transportation throughout the region. Families made an entire day out of a trip to the city to pick up groceries, clothes and household goods on the bustling streets of our town. Automobiles are destroying the social fabric of our city and surrounding communities today. Pollution, congestion, noise and a general lack of respect for cyclists and pedestrians are all playing a major role in the deterioration of Richmond today. Is it a surprise that the city is currently in a 56 year population low. Come join the struggle against CARMAGEDDON as we take back the streets.

Friday September 26, 1997
Monroe Park 4 P.M.

I was taken into custody immediately for evasion of my court date and was told I would be spending the night with a court hearing in the morning. My bail was set at \$500 and I used my one call to alert my house mates as to my whereabouts. After the processing I was released from the holding pen and given my own cell.

Ironically enough my cell was slightly bigger than my 9' x 5' room at the time. I didn't sleep more than two or three hours that night. The steel and concrete enclave that was my temporary living quarters had my mind racing 1,000 miles an hour. Around 6 A.M. I was awakened and offered a plate of sausage and biscuits which I passed over to the next guy.

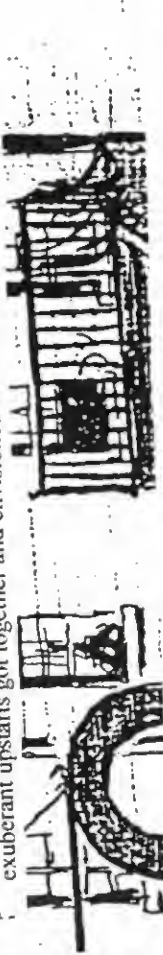
Eventually the tiring process of transferring a group of a dozen or so of us from the jailhouse to the courthouse got under way. I went even begin to give you the tedious account of this whole ordeal. I was finally brought in front of the good ol' Judge Jones a few hours later. He said "Services rendered. Next time show up for your date and save you and me both the hassle." Sure I said as I was released by the same woman who had detained me a month earlier. She smiled at me curiously, gave me my papers and left.

I scrambled back to my bike four blocks away and rode all the way home down the middle of Main Street during early morning downtown traffic to the tune of honking cars. Things had truly come around full circle. I nearly choked on the absurdity of it all.



Since 1861, when a group of racist politicians drew up a plan to curb minority voting in the city by creating a new predominantly African ward in the city's North side, closed door politics have been a staple in Richmond. That ward eliminated the undesirables (i.e. poor blacks) from being able to disrupt the city voting in several districts and pigeonholed them into one giant shoestring region ushering in the modern era of gerrymandering regions for political gain. Jackson Ward was born.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly when and where the fabled gathering of the Richmond wisemen went down, but there's no denying that a lot of old Virginia money and exuberant upstarts got together and envisioned the Richmond of the future.



I can picture it now. The Ukrop's Brothers (ultra right wing grocers), Bruce Gottwald of the Ethyl Corporation (manufacturers of gasoline additives and destroyers of community), The Sons of the Confederacy (obvious), and a over zealous Eugene Trani of V.C.U. (see also gentrifiers, homeless harassers), all gazing lustfully over an aerial map of the city and dividing up the city like children trading baseball cards.



A lot was happening around that era that goes a long way to validating such a meeting might have occurred. The industrial backbone of the city began to fall prey to the rapid suburbanization of the period. This opened the floodgates for a push to a more technologically based city of which the negative repercussions are still being felt by the massive proletarian population of the city. This mounting economic stress led to high unemployment rates, urban blight, skyrocketing crime rates and a booming homeless community placed between 3 and 4,000 today. If Richmond wanted to become a big league city, it sure was drumming up its share of big league problems.

The Virginia Commonwealth University (V.C.U.) which was founded in 1968, brought with it high hopes of becoming a competitive urban university with the potential to rival its Northern brethren. It didn't take long for university planners to figure out that some toes were going to have to be stepped on for the grand vision of the school to come into fruition.

Around about 1980, the first sign of the "manifest destiny" (an often talked about plan for expansion South to the R.M.A. X-Way & North to I-64) theory came into being when the school destroyed close to 100 homes and small businesses from the North side of West Cary Street & South side of West Main Street between Cherry and Pine Streets, dangerously close to Oregon Hill's Northern border. A decade would pass before the people of Oregon Hill would hear from V.C.U. again.

In 1990, the then recently hired president of V.C.U., Eugene Trani and university planners released blueprints that called for a 28 acre expansion of the academic campus down to the RMA X-way in Oregon Hill and West to Morris Street in the Fan District. After neighborhood outcries and a pending lawsuit at the hands of the A.C.L.U. V.C.U. gave up. A popular bumper sticker of the time read "V.C.U. go North not South or West". University planners must have taken note as the bullseye was now squarely placed on the Carver Community.

Carver, also known as Newtowne South has a long and rich history of being home to some of Richmond's first post war free blacks. About the same time Oregon Hill was combatting V.C.U., the City was busy demolishing several of the oldest surviving homes of the original founders of the neighborhood today known as Carver. A decade has passed and the proud citizens of Carver are seeing their neighborhood disappear into thin air.

In the mid to late 90's, V.C.U. has led a triple pronged assault North of Broad Street into the heart of Carver. University facilities now dot the landscape on the Southern edge of the community. This intrusion is also being played out on a door to door basis as students with wealthy families are moving in and driving the rents thru the roof. Gentrification is now running rampant. A few months ago V.C.U. announced that the university police force now have unlimited jurisdiction in the neighborhood.

We then proceeded back to Monroe Park to discuss and strategize as to what to do with our mountain of fines and pending court dates. It was decided that we would have a benefit dinner at my old house to raise funds and plan for the future.

A couple of weeks later two of the riders, Mark and Stowe, had their hearings at the Traffic Court at the hands of the infamous Judge Jones. Jones had garnered a severe backlash in 1996 when during a hearing he asked a white traffic cop "if he got a look at how many gold teeth the negroes had?" I was present that day in solidarity with my fellow two wheel comrades.



When the bailiff ordered all to rise for the honorable Judge Jones I remained seated and created a minor spectacle. One of the courtroom cops rush toward me and tried to force me to rise. When I refused, I was escorted to the rear of the courtroom. I was told that I had to stand and show proper respect before I could leave. I then pulled away from the cop and asked if I was being detained. When she said no I fled the courtroom followed by a plain clothes agent the entire way out of the building.

My court date which was in mid-October came and went while I was away on a trip to Texas. As I returned to Richmond in early November I received an official letter in the mail that ordered me to proceed directly to the city lock-up without calling first. Having a good idea what was going on I grabbed a warm jacket, hopped on my bike and rode downtown fully prepared to spend the night.

We followed Main all the way down into the thick of Carytown (typical inner city elitist shopping district) where we crossed over to Cary Street to disrupt the West End weekend window shoppers. Needless to say our local law enforcement contingency did not take to kindly to fifty poor kids from the urban ghettos halting the flow of traffic on a Friday afternoon.

We snail paced our way down the shopping corridor until we arrived at Boulevard Street to take a left turn. Boulevard is a very wide four lane street that we couldn't effectively hold back both lanes on the Northbound side of the street. For some reason I felt compelled to single handedly attempt this foolish feat. After about three blocks of this madness I was flagged to the side of the road by a Johnny Law type.



I was charged with "disrupting the flow of traffic/riding too slow" and given a court date. With my ticket in hand the procession took a turn for the worse down Monument Avenue. Monument Avenue is a street that runs through the prominent Fan District that has numerous major Civil War statues and is home to a significant amount of the power elite. Little did we know that peering out from behind a curtain on Monument was none other than the local traffic judge and notorious racist Judge Jones. Take note this plays into the story later.

Monument was very difficult to hold down with our rapidly deteriorating numbers. Drivers were becoming increasingly hostile and hard to deal with. By this time we were playing a cat & mouse game with several police cruisers and morale was slipping. So, we regrouped and cut over onto Park Avenue when things started to go downhill.

After a cop intervention a woman Dawn was told that by refusing to give up her name and i.d. that she would be taken to jail. Stubborn as it may have been, Dawn felt that the cop had no moral ground for the harassment. So away Dawn went to jail. She was released after a couple of hours. Several other folks were fined for a wide range of bogus charges and the ride came to an abrupt halt.

If you were to hear things from Barbara Abernathy (head of the Carver Civic Association) you might assume V.C.U.'s presence has been a blessing. If you were to consult with long time Carver resident and community activist Sababu Sanyika things couldn't be much worse. According to Mr. Sanyika "Mrs. Abernathy is living lavishly off of the coattails of V.C.U. and playing a high stakes public relations game in order to ensure further favoritism from Trani and his wrecking crew."

IN SOLIDARITY MARCH AND DEMONSTRATE
WORKER

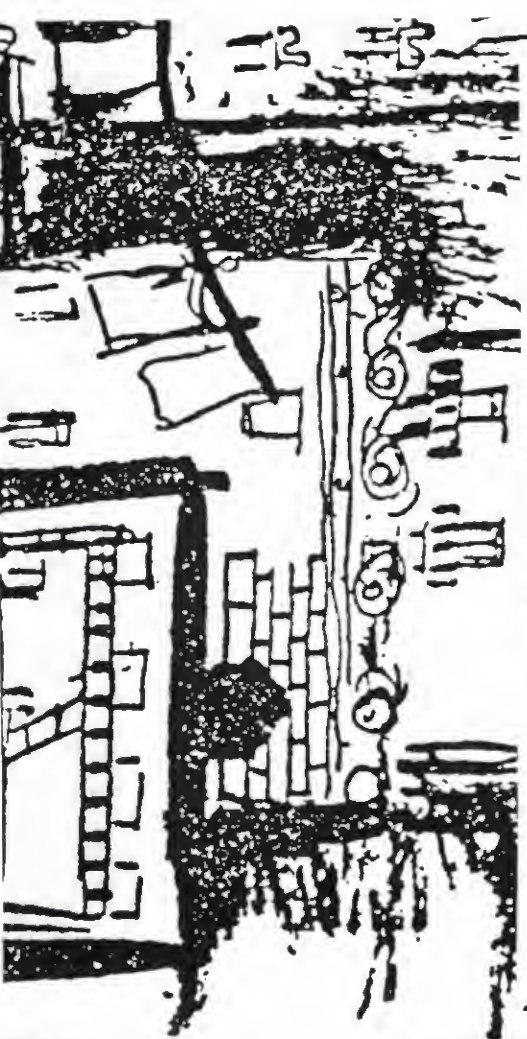
Meanwhile across Belvidere Street from Carver, Jackson Ward citizens are bracing for the battle of their lives. Jackson Ward, Richmond's oldest and most thriving African community was once known as the Harlem of the South. As if one of the city's largest pockets of dilapidated houses, drugs and crime don't plague the neighborhood enough, Jackson Ward must now contend with the gigantic expansion plans of the Richmond (Convention) Centre Westbound along Marshall Street between 3rd and 5th Streets.

The expansion which will run \$158 million and will not be finished until 2002 is bringing in the millennium with high hopes of tourism dollars at the hands of Richmond's downtrodden inner city inhabitants. With City Council as an ally the Richmond Centre all but sealed the doom on eight historic Jackson Ward homes near the intersection of 3rd and Clay Streets. The effect of the expansion has been felt as far away as West Grace Street where a row of independent businesses have been warned that their buildings may be demolished to make room for a skyscraper hotel to be built on the land to accommodate the "no doubt influx of tourists" once the Centre is completed. Jackson Ward is gearing up for a long war.



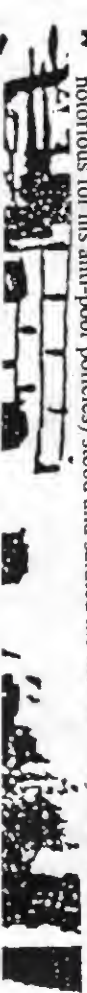
In the early Summer of '99, Richmond proudly unveiled the crowning jewel that's going to "revitalize" the ever desolate downtown once and for all, the \$52 million completion of the Canal Front Redevelopment Plan. Harking back to the 1996 Arthur Ashe statue rumblings, nothing less than a full blown public relations nightmare embraced its arrival.

The canals, which saw an opening day highlighted by the nearby community relations day of the Marines before they embarked on a 2 week urban warfare mission in the city's Northside, had to once again deal with Richmond's ghosts.



City Council member Saad El-Amin, always on the offensive, swore that he would stage a full scale boycott off the canals if a nearby mural of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, wasn't instantly removed.

So, on opening day with the spotlight on Richmond and the General long gone, a couple of dozen good ol' Sons of the Confederacy reared their ugly heads in protest at the 14th Street Bridge overlooking the Kanawha Canal. As the first boat load of city dignitaries passed under the bridge former City Manager Robert Bobb (who was notorious for his anti-poor policies) stood and saluted the men as if they were heroes.

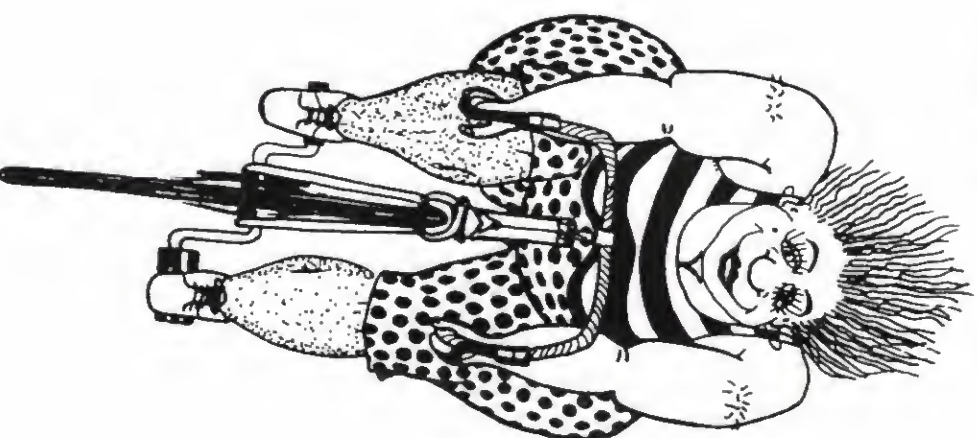


The desolate stretch of riverfront the Canal Walk covers may some day evolve into a prosperous and alluring tourist destination. The Richmond Centre may pump crowds and major events in downtown and V.C.U. may grow to be the much hyped urban treasure that it believes it is. But at the rate our "small time" big city is gobbling up the communities we live and work in, there will be no one left to revel in all our glory.



Once upon a time in the Summer of 1997 there was a flourishing Critical Mass movement in Richmond. Well, okay so maybe 40-50 folks isn't up to San Francisco level, but anytime that many people align for anything in Richmond something is being done right. After several successful Summer rides the September 26, 1997 outing was gearing up to be our best yet.

As the day arrived we were blessed with a beautiful Indian Summer afternoon and a healthy turnout. After the typical pre-ride jibberish myself and a couple other exuberant youth led the brigade of two wheel warriors as we headed Westbound down Main Street through the V.C.U. campus and the Fan District.



I'll try to stick to just the important details, because if you've heard one account you've heard them all. Lets just say that we were riding really really slow. Somewhere around the 1-2 mile an hour range and we completely ate up both lanes of traffic along Main Street during Friday afternoon rush hour.

The Great Critical Mass



Fiasco of '97

SAVE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN RICHMOND!

BE AT CITY HALL
MONDAY

JULY 26, 6:00PM

Come Support A

Common Sense Plan

For our Historic Downtown!

Council Chambers,
City Hall, Suite 200
900 E. Broad St.
Richmond, Va.

**HELP SAVE OUR
ARCHITECTURAL
TREASURES**

(You may want to call first.
Time & date could change)

Don't Wait For
"Someone Else!"

We need you!

**GIVE ME ARCHITECTURE,
OR GIVE ME DEATH!**

BALL OR
WHITE
CITY
BOUNCE!!



CITY COUNCIL VOICE MAIL: 780-7955 FAX: 780-7736 900 E. BROAD RICHMOND, VA.

Timothy M. Kaine
Mayor

Rudolph C. McCollum, Jr.
Vice Mayor

John A. Conrad
Delores L. McQuinn
Reva M. Trammell

Rev. Gwen C. Hedgepeth
Sa'ad El-Amin
W. Randolph Johnson Jr.
Joseph E. Brooks

Like chattel slavery and religious persecution, the mistreatment of prostitutes is an age-old practice rooted in the social structures of very ancient times. In earlier civilizations, women were literally bought and sold as property. Prostitutes were considered "used goods" in the same way as used cars and hand-me-down clothes in our own culture. The social position of prostitute women was further diminished by the membership of many of them in the slave classes. Women who entered prostitution voluntarily were considered an affront and a danger to male authority. Historically, prostitutes have been flogged, beaten, tortured, imprisoned, exiled and executed.

Contemporary American anti-prostitute laws are rooted in the "eugenics" practices and beliefs adopted by many physicians in the late nineteenth century. The goal of the eugenics movement was to eliminate birth defects, venereal diseases, and persons regarded as sexual deviates by means of castration, chloroform, sterilization, electric shock, criminalization and imprisonment. Targets included homosexuals, orphaned children, the mentally handicapped and prostitutes. Many of the laws enacted during this time remain on the books today.

Nearly a thousand arrests are made in the Richmond area each year for solicitation, prostitution and sodomy. Richmond's prostitute population includes both males and females. Most of them come from the poorer classes. The majority are African-American. Many are single parents. Many are addicted to drugs. All of them practice prostitution as a means of supporting their habits, feeding their kids, paying the rent and surviving.

Hostility to prostitutes comes primarily from elite "civic" organizations, such as the Fan District Association, who view the presence of prostitutes on city streets as a threat to their own class position, property values, lifestyle interests and status of artificial superiority. Persecution of prostitutes is also a lucrative business for the police and the city administration. So-called "vice enforcement" is a source of employment for police. Cops are sometimes paid a bounty for every prostitute they drag in off the streets. Arrests for prostitution are a way for police to inflate arrest statistics in order to demand a larger budget. In many urban areas, prostitution enforcement is the single largest item in the police budget. Many cops use vice-related work as a means of career advancement. Former Richmond vice lieutenant Walter Allman was recently promoted to police captain. Prostitution cases also provide business for prosecutors and the city of Richmond generates nearly half a million dollars a year in revenue from fines collected from prostitutes.

Richmond prostitutes are frequently subjected to physical and sexual assault by vice cops. One member of the Richmond vice squad, Mark Williams, is a known sexual sadist. He once inflicted a brutal beating on a 43-year-old African American female prostitute who was subsequently hospitalized for four days. Williams has inflicted beatings on other prostitutes as well. Vice cops sometimes engage in sexual acts such as fellatio, fondling, disrobing and even vaginal penetration with prostitutes before arresting them. Other vice cops have engaged in drug use with prostitutes whom they subsequently arrested. Some Richmond vice cops and uniformed policemen alike accept bribes and sexual favors as a payment for looking the other way. Some cops have used prostitutes as a means of blackmailing rival members of the police force.

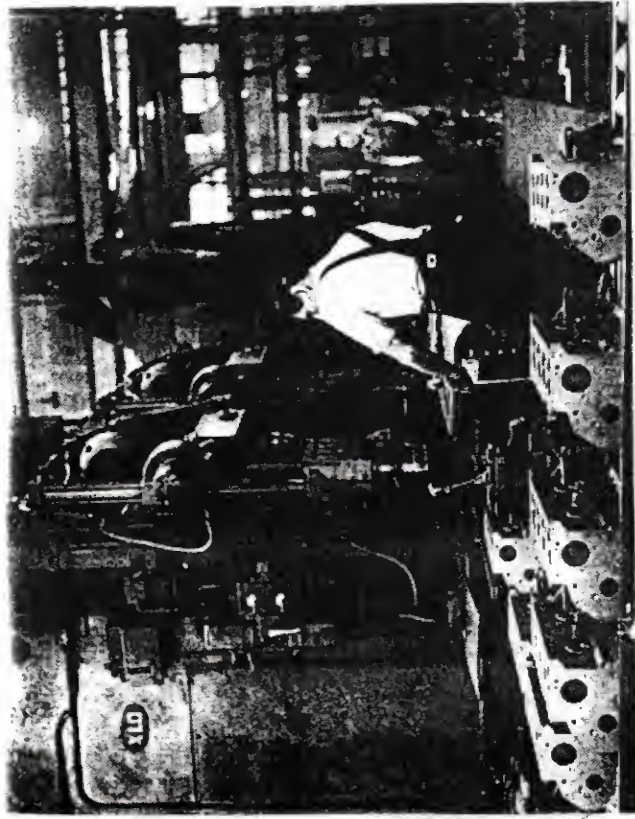
Vice enforcement often involves the sleaziest tactics imaginable. Vice agents use intrusive and degrading surveillance methods, hoping to catch prostitutes "in the act" with their clients. Vice agents pretending to be "cruising" Johns often take prostitutes to private locations and expose themselves and arrest the prostitute when she/he responds. Vice cops sit in local bars, drink and attempt to approach and entrap women known to be prostitutes. Surveillance cameras are sometimes hidden in the rooms of Richmond hotels known to be "hot spots" for prostitution.

SMASH

WHY NOT? WE HAVE OUR
GUNS! WHY LIVE LIKE DIRT
IF WE CAN LIVE LIKE
KINGS? YOU'RE NOT
AFRAID?



CAPITAL



Soon I completely ran out of money and had to head back to my parent's house. This killed me and drove me to find new work almost right away in order to get back out as soon as possible. In the following weeks I must have filled out twenty applications before I had any luck. Finally around October of that year I got hired on at Papa John's Pizza as an order taker and oven tender for \$4.85 an hour.

This was no ordinary Papa John's and I learned that on my first night as the big Kahuna himself walked in, John Schnaider. The head C.E.O. actually personally owned and stopped by the store I worked at on a regular basis. Not only that, but his wife came into the store and worked the make line on Friday nights. This was very bizarre and created an unbelievable amount of tension.

Nonetheless I was enjoying working there and I managed to secure enough left over food to feed all of my friends and half of the homeless population of Bardstown Road. This was the first job I ever worked where the managers were every bit as juvenile as the employees. It was a pretty fun time working there but I couldn't stand being stagnant and quit near the end of the year in search of that one perfect job out there some where waiting to be discovered.



Part II '94-'95 coming in issue #5

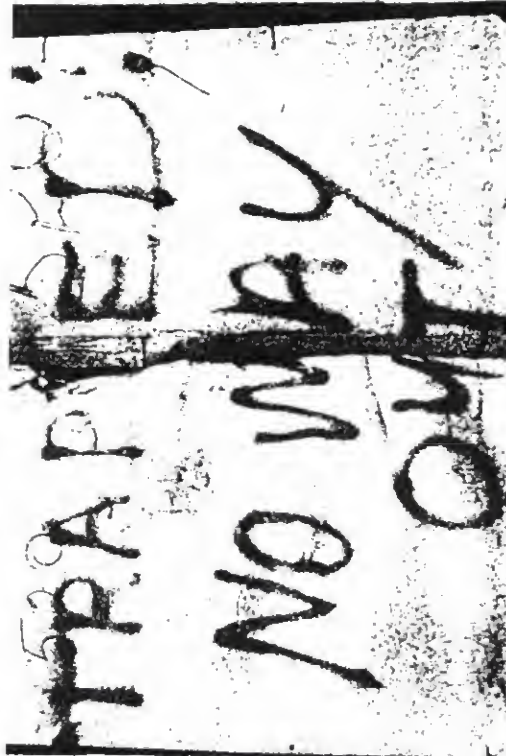
Vice officials deliberately present fraudulent information to the media regarding HIV/AIDS rates among Richmond prostitutes. The vice squad has at times claimed that ninety-nine percent of Richmond prostitutes are HIV-positive and that the average prostitute in Richmond carries four or five venereal diseases. A check with the Department of Health will

disprove these claims. Prostitutes are publicly scapegoated for AIDS by the Fan District Association. Privately, the association claims prostitutes are a threat to their property values.

The vice cops usually attempt to have prostitution cases heard under Judge Ralph Robertson who typically hands out jail terms five times greater than the Richmond norm. Robertson has at times denounced prostitutes from the bench as depraved AIDS carriers, as a means of degrading and humiliating them. At the same time, Robertson looks the other way for prostitutes who are the clients of attorneys who are friends of his. Robertson also covers up for vice cops who assault prostitutes by refusing to allow them to tell their side of the story in court.

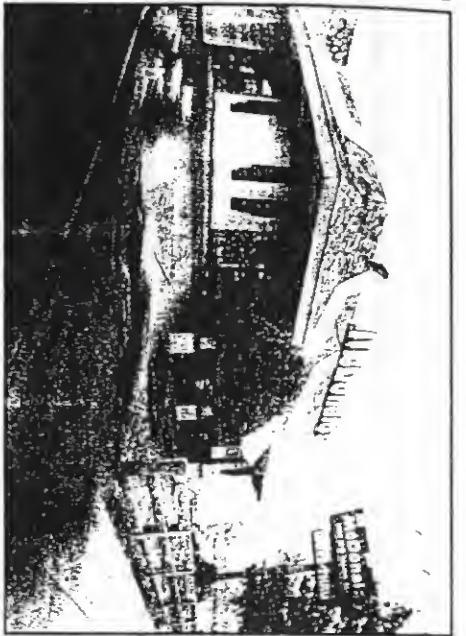


Vice agents often solicit oral rather than vaginal sex from prostitutes. This way, the prostitute can be charged with sodomy, a felony. The felony charge is then used by prosecutors to gain legal leverage in plea bargain negotiations and to obtain parole and probation violations. Police refuse to investigate crimes committed against prostitutes. One Richmond female prostitute was detained and interrogated after being harassed and threatened by a car load of aggressive young men. Signs throughout Richmond neighborhoods declare "Prostitute-Free Zones" just as signs proclaiming "Jew-Free Zones" were placed in German neighborhoods sixty years ago.



Many prominent Richmond officials are involved in the persecution of prostitutes. Mayor Kaime provides the names of Johns arrested for solicitation to the Fan District Association who then informs the family of the arrested person. This creates the potential for violent domestic conflict. Police Chief has publicly blamed prostitutes for the illegal drug trade. Councilwoman Reva Trammell began her political career by waging a bigoted harassment campaign against prostitutes on Richmond's south side. The Philip Morris corporation provides fake employee identification cards to undercover vice agents. The Martin Agency and the Fan District Association have pressured the state government to raise prostitution from a misdemeanor to a felony.

The mistreatment of prostitutes is a crime against humanity. It is a crime every bit as heinous as racial and religious persecution or the abuse of children, the elderly or the handicapped. It should be recognized as such.



At least one conspiratorial Richmonder thinks the Cuytouw McDonald's is part of the military-industrial complex?

I saw extra spacious studios with large windows. "That will free up more room downstairs for people who are more child-oriented," explains Davis.

Currently, the arts center occupies two floors with 118 studios. More than 150 artists, from painters to sculptors to a graffiti artist, have studio space and exhibit their work at the arts center. Ron IVARD, FORT

Would You Like Fries With That Political Statement?

Following NATO's blunderous bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, protesters in China stormed the U.S. Embassy and broke windows in McDonald's restaurants.

And here at home, a lone dissident apparently showed his or her solidarity with the Chinese by spray-painting the deeply political statement "Go China too!" on the McDonald's in Cuytouw.

The Shockoe Bottom Arts Center hopes to expand its studio space by 10,000 square feet.

McDonald's here? We're relatively certain these weren't Adamses that fell over Helgrade.

Still, the spray painter argues, "The protesters in China have made the connection between the U.S. war machine and corporate imperialism."

A perplexed manager at the Cuytouw McDonald's said the restaurant has already painted over the graffiti and did not call

had undoubtedly contributed to the American military-industrial complex. R.I.

In support of McVandals

This letter is in response to article on "Would You Like Fries with That Political Statement?" (Street Talk, May 25). The criticism of the vandalism on the Cuytouw McDonald's lacked mature criticism or insight. It is pretty obvious that the vandals were not addressing "McMensies."

I saw the actions of the Cuytouw vandals as an act of rejecting an inescapable chain corporation, out of anger and frustration, inspired by the activity in China. Quite possibly, the activists wanted to inspire others to make their own statements. In a way, it says a lot about the political consciousness of *Street Talk's* writers and the majority you are addressing. The "attack" made me think about McDonald's presence in Cuytouw as a problem for independent businesses in the area. In many other cities with shopping streets such as Cuytouw, chain stores are feared and loathed. They are hard to fight off and eventually they pop up, one after another. It is usually downhill from there; the character of the neighborhood is lost. The shopping street that should have only the real flavor of the local shop owner is then glazed over by the generic, bland, mall-ness of corporate, chain consumption.

It's time to look harder at these issues and take action. Yeah, maybe even spend the \$1 on spray paint. At least things can start looking better. ...

BETTY MARKS

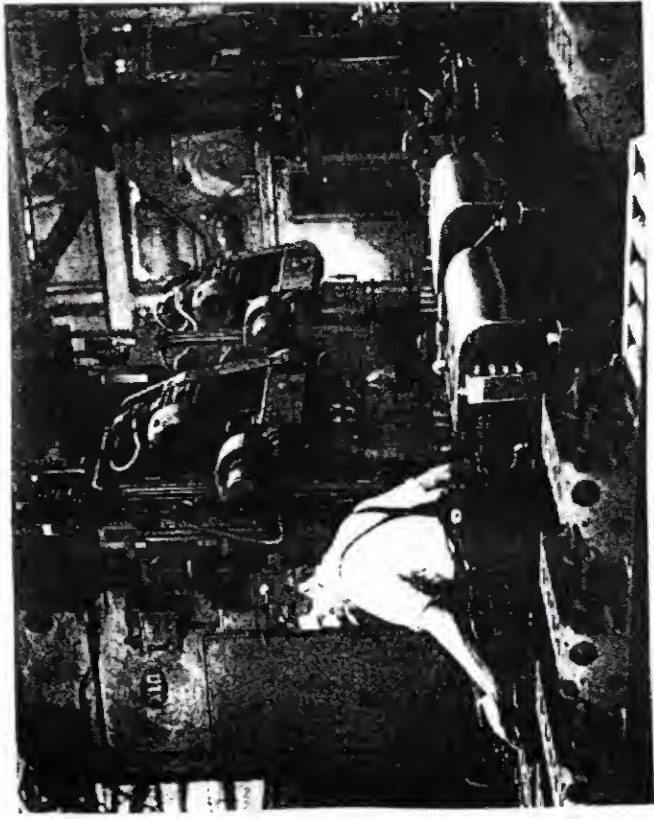
The main boss Ron was a very hard person to deal with. A real maniac who often times verbally chastised workers in public. This was my first ever experience with a slave driving boss. Ron would try to turn workers against each other by spreading misinformation. It was his goal to ensure there was no solidarity amongst workers thus solidifying his status. We began butting heads almost immediately.



Ron would often times give me big assignments late in the day forcing me to work long, tiring hours. He was out to get me and I sensed it. I was determined not to let him win. Soon I had saved up enough money to move out on my own with a couple of friends across town. I was getting more and more fed up with the job and more and more entrenched in my new house.

One Monday I decided that I did not care to go in and did not bother calling. A couple of hours later Ron called me and asked me what was up. I told him that I did not feel like coming in today and I might not tomorrow. I guess that sealed my fate as he said not to bother coming back at all. I was eighteen, living on my own, unemployed with rapidly dwindling funds. What to do.

In the three months that I was living in the Highlands (hip urban neighborhood in Louisville) I had three jobs. I worked for a single day as a morning janitor at a Wendy's two blocks from my house. I made another futile one week attempt as a late night stocker at an East end Kroger's and from time to time would work as a clerk in the punk room of a local independent record store called Better Days. With the exception of getting paid in inventory at the record store and meeting lots of cool people there, all three of these jobs were uneventful and not really worthy of further details.



It was nearing the Summer of '93 when my stepmother told me that her place of employment was hiring 10-12 part timers and that family members of employees would be given special consideration. So, I eagerly went to the factory and filled out all the paperwork, completed all the battery tests and passed the required physical, that included having a rod stuck up my urethra to check for v.d. A few days later I was informed that I had gotten one of the general laborer B positions and would be started at \$8.50 an hour.

Olympic Paint & Stain was by far the most by the book work environment I've ever been in. Punching in and out for every move you made was closely watched. If you spent more than five minutes in the bathroom someone would come in and tell you to hurry up. Very strict, very mean foremen with an eye always on you.

There were probably 50-60 full timers, 10-15 lab technicians, 5 or 6 foremen and the 10 of us lowly part timers. General laborer B, which I quickly discovered meant that we went where we were told and jumped from station to station all day long.

For the first couple of weeks I did a little bit of everything. Handyman, janitor, mixer and even a very brief stay on the forklift. Meanwhile I was learning the ropes and making lots of friends. Soon I began running a five gallon filling machine. This became my primary task and was where I was stationed daily. It was mind numbing work. I was given a daily quota and expected to fill it before I could leave.

Sometimes I would work with a guy named Orlando who was also a part timer. Orlando seemed to be always messing up and getting a lot of shit for it. But he was my number one comrade and we soon became inseparable.



"Jobs I've had Part 1 '91-'93"

I started out humbly enough as most teenagers do with odd jobs around the neighborhood and helping my stepfather in various ventures. But I unlike most other kids these days held off getting my first "real job" until the Fall of my senior year in high school (1991). Looking back years down the line I can honestly say I had no rationale for getting a job. I was living at home, had no expenses and really did not spend that much money. I suppose all of my friends had jobs and I thought it was something I had to do to prepare myself for the real world.

So there I was, seventeen years old eager and ready to make the most of my new occupation at Long John Silver's. I was trained on the delicate inner workings of the deep fryers. Nearly everything was cooked in this manner. Fish, chicken, shrimp, fries, hushpuppies and so forth.

Even in my work infancy I figured out the job perks easily. The main scam I worked out was to overcook large amounts of food near closing time, so I could smuggle out lots of extras every night. I also quickly discovered the technique of clocking in early while waiting to begin work and not clocking out until my ride home arrived at night. I managed to stick it out as a frydaddy for close to a month for \$3.85 an hour before hanging up my apron. It would be eight months before I would venture into the world of work again.

Come June of '92 I was fresh out of school and ready for work again. I got hired as a stocker for a grocery store called Kroger's before the store opened. If I did well during the pre-stock period I would be hired on full time when the store opened. Once I began I knew it was going to be interesting if nothing else. All kinds of rednecks and scumbags were to be my co-workers. With nearly thirty or so of us doing stock in a gigantic store, learning and mastering the art of disappearing on the clock was a cinch.

There were lots of anxious loudmouths that loved to talk shit at any spare moment. Unfortunately for me I was stationed with one of the chief antagonists. I had been working there for close to a week and I enjoyed the job just fine. Simple, no pecky bosses and even fun on occasion, but on that day I was doomed for trouble.

While working with the big mouth he tried to engage me in a conversation about "the laziness of the niggers, that worked there". Having nothing to do with it, I tried to ignore his bigotry. The next thing I knew a manager stormed up our aisle and said he had heard our conversation from the next row over. Without warning he fired us both on the spot.

I tried to explain to him that I had said a thing and that it was Mr. Bigmouth, but he wouldn't budge. A racist redneck had cost me my job. I would work at a Kroger's on the other side of town a year later for an equally short stint.

A couple of months later towards the end of Summer '92 I got hired on as a shophand for a commercial refrigeration company called Carter Service. My job was to clean and restore produce and frozen food cases that were resold at astronomical prices. It was one of my first lessons of capitalism and its destructive nature. Anyhow, it was a filthy, gritty job in a big dusty warehouse.



I worked with a guy named Jerry who spent a large majority of the day driving the shop truck around and goofing off. He taught me the trade and better yet taught me the fine art of slacking off. We would take one and a half hour lunches and only write them down for 45 minutes. We kept track of our own hours and manipulated this at every turn. Sometimes we would both drive all over town for a part that was available a block away. From time to time I could even sneak in a nap.



As the months grew on, I began to be sent out on big out of town jobs. I would purposefully get lost driving to these sites while on the clock. On one occasion I even stopped off to visit friends in another city for a couple of hours. Things got so slow that the few warehouse hands would gather in a faraway corner and gamble over games of quarter bounce to pass time. One day I found out that the parts manager was a bookie. This was the worst thing ever. I would bet and loose much money during the N.B.A. season.

I worked for Carter service on three separate instances between 1992-1995, earning between \$5 and \$6.50 an hour by my last stint. I learned a lot about worker comradetrie and taking advantage of the boss. A lot of my early introduction to class consciousness can be attributed to my various stays at Carter's. I will take these experiences with me to the grave.

Next, I went to work for the largest employer in the country today, Manpower Inc. The ever blossoming temp labor marketplace is the fastest growing work sector this side of prison workfare programs.

My first assignment was for a place called Challenger Lifts in the Downtown industrial district. This was my first exposure to a diverse work environment. I was stationed on a giant drilling machine that always fucked up. Since I was a temp I had no fear in losing the job as I knew I could replace it with another menial one tomorrow. So, I took a lot of chances. I would wander through the factory for long intervals at a time engaging any who would oblige into conversation.

The place had so many employees and was so enormous that you could literally not do any work all day and no one would notice. Once I intentionally sabotaged my own machine so I would not have to work that day. They sent me home with full pay due to their machines negligence.

I spent roughly two weeks at Challenger and probably cost them hundreds of dollars but I was rapidly becoming bored so I opted for a new assignment. Being in the no to low skills department I was dispatched to the Southside of Louisville near the riverport at a place called Yokohama Tires. On my first day I arrived at 6 a.m. for a series of motor skills tests to prepare me for the single most excruciating day of manual labor. I've ever encountered.

My task for the day was to load a gigantic tractor trailer full of specific tires from a list I was given. I had to scour the massive warehouse to find the appropriate stock and bring it to the loading area. Myself and several other temps worked diligently for eleven hours to complete this momentous task. Some of the tires were as big as I and had to be stacked six high. At the end of the day my body was defeated. Needless to say it was my first ever one day job. After spending the past few weeks working in brutal temp conditions I was ready for a change.

